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ABSTRACT

The 1974-1975 Reading Skills Center component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I Remedial Services for Eligible Nonpublic School Pupils Program was designed to provide intensive diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction for students in grades four through eight who had evidence of reading retardation in excess of two and one half years below their nominal grade level. Priority for participation in the program was given to those pupils who had previously participated in the Title I nonpublic school corrective reading program and who had made little or insufficient progress. Students attended centers in groups of five students per teacher. They received instruction for three to five sessions per week in class periods ranging from 45 to 60 minutes. Two teachers were located at each of the eight centers so that a total of about four hundred students could be served. Instruction centered around the use of the Random House High Intensity Learning System in Reading. This system is composed of three major components: the classroom management system, a library of reading materials, and a staff development program. The classroom management system contains a compilation of 500 specific reading objectives with a listing of the precise instructional activities that foster the attainment of the specified objectives. The evaluation objective, "showing significant improvement in reading", was achieved. Program strengths included a favorable teacher student ratio, the quality of the teaching staff and their effort, skillful supervision, the selection of appropriate facilities and materials, and the eclectic approach of program staff. (Author/AM)

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ED 137462

EVALUATION REPORT

Function No. 09-59627

CENTRAL 1974-1975 TITLE I REMEDIAL SERVICES
FOR ELIGIBLE NONPUBLIC SCHOOL PUPILS
READING SKILLS CENTER COMPONENT ;

School Year 1974-1975

Kenneth Berger

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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*An evaluation of a New York City
School District educational project
funded under Title I of the Elementary
and Secondary Education Act of 1965
(PL 89-10) performed for the Board
of Education of the City of New
York for the 1974-75 school year.*

Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni, Director



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ERRATA

The first line on page 9 of this report should read as follows:

3:86 exceeded the mean expected posttest (3.28) by 0.58 GE units.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROGRAM

The Reading Skills Center program was designed to provide intensive diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction for students in grades four through eight who had evidenced severe reading retardation. The eight Centers were located in Title I eligible nonpublic schools receiving five full days of corrective reading services. In order to insure that the schools most in need of the services received them and that a sufficiently broad base for student enrollment existed, participating schools were required to have an eligible population of at least 175 students in need of reading services.

In addition to these general requirements, each participating school was required to have a minimum of fifty students in grades four through eight who exhibited a minimal reading retardation of two and one-half years below their nominal grade equivalent. Priority for participation in the program was given to those pupils who had previously participated in the Title I nonpublic school corrective reading program and who had made little or insufficient progress.

The selection of program participants was accomplished in two phases. During the spring of 1974, initial recommendations were made by nonpublic school principals and classroom teachers, and by Title I staff from other components. These recommendations, accompanied by standardized test scores, were reviewed by the Reading Skills Center

teachers and were used as a basis for further testing. Final selection was based upon performance on the appropriate level of the Stanford Diagnostic Test (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York: 1966).

The Reading Skills Center program functioned throughout the 1974-1975 school year from September through June. However, it should be noted that the program was pilot tested at four sites during the last four months of the 1973-1974 school year. That initial phase undoubtedly contributed to smoother administrative functioning in the 1974-1975 program. Furthermore, the training of teachers was facilitated since the eight teachers involved in the pilot project were each assigned to one of the 1974-75 sites along with a new teacher.

Students were scheduled to attend the Centers in groups of five students per teacher. The groups received instruction for three to five sessions per week in class periods ranging from forty-five to sixty minutes. The variation of the schedules between schools resulted from the desire to accommodate the Reading Skills Center program to the needs of the particular nonpublic host school.

Each of the nonpublic schools was required to provide a classroom suitable to the needs of the Reading Skills Center. The Centers housed two teachers, ten students per session, desks and chairs for teachers and students, and a wide variety of reading material including kits, workbooks, hardcover and paperback literature, games and a large assortment of audio-visual hardware and software.

Instruction in the program centered around the use of the Random House High Intensity Learning System in Reading. The system is composed of three major components: 1) the classroom management system, 2) a library of reading materials, and 3) a staff development program. The classroom management system contains a compilation of 500 specific reading objectives with a listing of the precise instructional activities that foster the attainment of the specified objective. The prescribed activities are coded so that students can find the appropriate learning activity within the library of reading materials. The staff development aspect of the system provides consultants to explain the system to teachers in a workshop setting and to monitor the implementation of the program by means of site visits.

The Random House system provides instructional activities to students in the areas of word study, vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills. Students are assigned a specific number of instructional objectives in each of these four areas based upon initial reading performance at the start of the school year. Students with the weakest skills concentrate on word study, at the same time that they work on skills in the other three areas, while those with increasingly better skills spend proportionately more time in vocabulary, comprehension, and study skills exercises. The actual activities are assigned by the teacher.

Typically, a student completes a "check-in" test to determine if the particular instructional objective is appropriate, i.e., not too difficult

and not too simple. When mastery of the instructional objective is thought to be accomplished, the student takes a "checkout" test. If successful, the student moves on to the next prescribed activity. If not, the student engages in additional activities until mastery is achieved

Since the learning is largely self-directed and self-paced, the teacher is free to work with individual students while others are working on their own. Thus students work on individual selected assignments on the one hand while frequently obtaining individual instructional assistance from their own teacher.

The proposal to fund the project suggested that continued failure in reading may be related to certain emotional and other related learning difficulties. Accordingly, a special effort was made to refer Reading Skills Center participants to Title I clinical-guidance and speech personnel. These services were provided on the basis of need.

In summary, the Reading Skills Center program was designed to provide individualized diagnostic and prescriptive reading skills instruction, along with a group pupil-teacher ratio of five-to-one, for students evidencing reading retardation in excess of two and one-half years below their nominal grade level. Each teacher taught five groups so that fifty students were serviced in each Center, and a total of four hundred students were served throughout the eight nonpublic school sites.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

This section of the report deals with the procedures used to assess the degree of attainment of the evaluation objective of the Reading Skills Center component.

Evaluation Objective

To determine whether as a result of participation in the Reading Skills Center component in the nonpublic schools program, the reading achievement scores of the students will show a statistically significant improvement, using the real posttest scores and anticipated posttest scores.

In addition to an overall test of the significance of the real posttest scores over the anticipated posttest scores, the evaluation plan called for separate analyses of the performance of students who received special services provided by the supportive components, i.e., clinical guidance and speech therapy. (None of the students participating in the Reading Skills Center program were served by the homework helper component.) The statistical design called for the use of a split-plot factorial analysis for this purpose.

Evaluative Instruments

The evaluation design specified the use of Levels I and II of the Stanford Diagnostic Test in a pre/posttest paradigm. Level I was indicated for all students in grades three and four and for those students in grades five through eight reading below a 3.0 grade equivalent level. The remainder of participants in grades five through eight were tested using Level II of the Stanford Diagnostic Test.

Evaluation Schedule

Typically, pretests were administered in mid-September of 1974. However, spring 1974 test scores were used for students who were post-tested in another component and in the four Centers used to pilot test the program. Students admitted after the start of the program, were tested during their first week of attendance.

Posttests were administered during the last two weeks of April, 1975. However, where it was known that a student was to be discharged from the nonpublic school, the Center teacher administered the posttest prior to the actual discharge.

A two-phased evaluation reporting form was developed in order to insure accurate reporting of data and to enable preliminary analysis of the data to be performed early in the program year. These forms were collected and checked in January and were returned to the schools. The second phase of data reporting was conducted during the month of May. This procedure had the added advantage of enabling the evaluator to make ongoing formative inputs to project staff.

Treatment of the Data

Most of the students in grades four through six were tested with Level I of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, while Level II was generally employed in grades seven and eight. Accordingly, the split-plot factorial analysis was appropriate in these instances. However, the number of students served by the speech and clinical guidance components.

was so small that separate analyses were precluded. As a result, the students were regrouped according to a plan devised in consultation with the head of the Consultant/Evaluator Unit of the Office of Educational Evaluation. Three groupings were formed for the purpose of analysis. One group was comprised of students who received only the Reading Skills Center service. A second group consisted of those who received one type of service in addition to the basic program, i.e., either speech or clinical guidance. Students in the third group received both of these additional services.

There were only 41 students in grade four through six tested on Level II and 44 in grades seven and eight who were tested on Level I of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test for whom complete data were available. As a result, the data for these two groups were analyzed using the overall real posttest versus anticipated posttest analysis.

Site Visits

Two Half-day visits to each site were made by the evaluation consultant. Teachers were given advance notice of these visits by the project coordinator. While this procedure may have caused teachers to make special preparations, a reasonable sample of typical activities was probably observed. Site visits included meetings with many of the host school principles. Informal discussions with individual students often occurred.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

Table 1 presents a summary of mean group scores for the pretest and posttest as well as the anticipated or expected posttest scores. The scores were analyzed separately for each test level and for each of the two grade groupings. In all cases the posttest means exceeded the pretest means, with mean differences ranging from 0.80 to 1.47 grade equivalent (GE) units. Similarly, mean posttest/expected posttest differences ranged from 0.54 to 1.11 grade equivalent units.

Table 1

Mean Group Scores as a Function of Grade
and Test Levels

Test form	Grades 4-6				Grades 7-8			
	N	Pretest	Expected Posttest	Posttest	N	Pretest	Expected Posttest	Posttest
Level I	117	2.37	2.63	3.17	44	3.02	3.28	3.86
Level II	41	2.57	2.80	3.88	199	3.97	4.33	5.44

The scores of the 44 grade seven and eight students who were tested on Level I were analyzed using a correlated t test for the difference between actual posttest and anticipated posttest. The posttest mean of

3.86 exceeded the mean expected posttest (3.02) by 0.84 GE units. This difference was found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$). (See line 2, Item 26 of the appended MIR).

A similar analysis was performed for the 41 grade four through six students tested on Level II of the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (see line 3). In this instance, the posttest mean of 3.88 exceeded the expected posttest by 1.08 GE units. This result was also found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The scores for the remaining two groups were analyzed using the split-plot analysis of variance method described above in Chapter II. In order to facilitate the discussion, the Level II test scores of the grade seven and eight pupils will be discussed first. Mean posttest and expected posttest scores as well as their standard deviations are presented in Table 2. In all, the scores of 199 students were analyzed. Sixty-nine of these students received only the Reading Skills Center treatment, while 109 received clinical guidance or speech (97 and 12 students respectively) in addition to the reading program, and 21 received both of these additional services.

While the expected posttest means varied up to about 0.5 GE's, the actual posttest means were all within 0.1 GE's. Differences between mean posttest and expected posttest performance ranged from 0.7 to 1.2 GE's for the three treatment groups. The summary of the analysis of variance for these differences is presented in Table 3.

Table 2

Analysis of the Performance of the Three
Treatment Groups -- Level II, Grades 7-8

N=199

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest		Expected Posttest	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Reading Skills Centers Only	69	4.04	5.49	0.95	4.40	1.31
Reading Skills Centers + 1 service	109	3.87	5.42	1.19	4.23	1.22
Reading Skills Centers + 2 services	21	4.29	5.41	0.79	4.71	1.03

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Summary Table
Posttest vs. Expected Posttest Scores

Level II, Grades 7-8

N=199

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
<u>Between subjects</u>					
Treatments	2.10	2	1.05	--	
Subjects within groups	305.94	196	1.56		
<u>Within subjects</u>					
Scores (expected vs. real)	62.28	1	62.28	124.56	<.001
Treatments X scores	0.07	2	0.04	--	
Scores X subjects within groups	98.45	196	0.50		

The analysis of variance reveals that the source of the only significant finding was the difference between the unweighted overall mean posttest and expected posttest scores (5.44 and 4.45 respectively). The unweighted mean posttest was significantly greater than the unweighted mean of the expected posttest scores ($p < .001$). The differences between the three treatment groups did not approach significance.

A similar analysis of the Level I scores for grades four through six proved to be somewhat more complex. Mean posttest and expected posttest scores for the three treatment groups are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Analysis of the Performance of the Three
Treatment Groups -- Level I, Grades 4-6

N=117

Group	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest		Expected Posttest	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Reading Skills Centers Only	24	2.62	3.55	0.70	2.90	0.63
Reading Skills Centers + 1 service	62	2.36	3.11	0.76	2.62	0.62
Reading Skills Centers + 2 services	31	2.20	2.98	0.72	2.44	0.60

For each of the three treatment groups, the actual posttest mean exceeded the expected posttest mean by at least one-half a grade equivalent. However, mean expected posttest scores and actual posttest scores were somewhat different across the groups. The summary of the analysis of variance is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Analysis of Variance Summary Table
Posttest vs. Expected Posttest Scores

Level I, Grades 4-6

N=117

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
<u>Between subjects</u>					
Treatments	5.66	2	2.83	3.45	<.05
Subjects within groups	93.14	114	0.82		
<u>Within subjects</u>					
Scores (expected vs. real)	15.66	1	15.66	120.46	<.001
Treatments X scores	3.66	2	1.83	14.08	<.001
Scores X subjects within groups	14.68	114	0.13		

Several sources of significant differences are identified in Table 5. One of these is difference between unweighted posttest and expected posttest means (3.21 and 2.65 respectively) which yielded a p value of less than .001. In addition, the combined posttest and expected posttest levels of the three treatment groups were found to be significantly

different ($p < .05$). Post hoc analysis revealed that the performance of the students in the Reading Skills Centers' only treatment group was superior to each of the other two treatment groups. However, this difference can best be attributed to the fact that the pretest mean of 2.62 for the Reading Skills Centers' only treatment group was higher than the pretest means of the other two groups. In the absence of pretest equality between the groups, no significant treatment effects can be inferred.

The interaction of treatment group with type of test score (real or expected posttest) was also found to be significant ($p < .001$). However, the type of analysis under consideration compares a real score to an hypothetical one. Accordingly, the interpretation of interactions is both obscure and of no practical importance in program evaluation.

Facilities and Materials

The selection of sites and the equipment contained therein was discussed in Chapter I. While there was some variation in the adequacy of the actual classrooms used for Reading Skills Centers, it was apparent that the project coordinator was able to secure the cooperation of host principals in selecting the best available rooms.

The learning materials contained in each room were appropriate for the varying reading and maturational levels of the participants. These materials were well displayed and made the rooms both attractive and functional. In addition, a good deal of student work was displayed.

Staff

The coordinator of the program had previously been a field supervisor of corrective reading for the nonpublic school ESEA program. Her training includes a masters degree in reading and Learning Disabilities as well as advanced training in educational administration. A number of the teaching staff also hold masters degrees in reading while most of the others have had considerable preparation. All staff members have previously taught reading.

The skills of the staff were quite good. Staff morale was excellent and identification with the program was sincere. Frequent supervisory visits were made by the project coordinator, and she was viewed most positively by the teachers.

In-service staff training in the diagnosis of reading problems is an important area that should receive greater focus in the future. Perhaps each staff meeting could have a segment devoted to such activities with presentations by teachers, the project coordinator, or outside resource personnel.

Students

As the year progressed, students became more accustomed to the working routine and required only minimal supervision by the teacher. Interviews with students revealed that they held very positive attitudes toward the Centers, the materials, and the teaching staff. For many stu-

dents, the Reading Skills Center was their most favored learning environment.

Discrepancy Analysis

As implemented, the Reading Skills Centers program coincided with the description of the program in the funding proposal. The identification of students reading in excess of two and one-half years below their nominal grade equivalent has been successful. However, the use of a single test administered in the Centers for diagnostic, evaluation, and placement purposes created some problems.

The screening process included the scanning of scores obtained on a reading test administered by the nonpublic school during the prior spring. The grade level score on that test suggested which level of the Stanford Diagnostic Test should be given to prospective participants. In some cases one of the test scores showed a minimum of two and one-half years retardation while the other did not. Since different reading tests do not correlate perfectly with one another, a strategy for dealing with this issue is detailed in the recommendations section of this report.

Complementary Services

The Reading Skills Center program is but one of the services included in the nonpublic school ESEA umbrella. Many of the participants in this component were also served by speech, clinical guidance and corrective mathematics personnel. In one school, a paraprofessional assisted the teachers in the instructional process.

The Role of Evaluation

Although program activities commenced in September, the evaluator was unable to begin site visits or to meet with teaching staff until December. This situation arose, in part, because meetings between administrative and evaluation personnel were not completed until the first week of November. The additional delay resulted from a disagreement centering upon the conditions for scheduling site visits.

Interactions with program staff and participants that occur early in the project year can give rise to important feedback so that changes can be made if and when they are necessary. However, such a strategy requires accepting the evaluator as part of the project team. Restrictive and cumbersome regulations and policies do not foster such an approach. A more positive view of the evaluation process would certainly be more productive.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The data growing out of the project were analyzed in four separate groupings reflecting two test levels and two grade clusters. Overall, mean pretest/posttest gains were in excess of one grade equivalent. In each of the four separate analyses, two of which employed the split-plot factorial design, differences between posttests and expected posttests were all statistically significant. These latter differences ranged from about 0.5 to 1.1 grade equivalent units.

The facilities for the program and the materials used in the program were quite good. "The Random House High Intensity Learning System in Reading" provided teachers and students with a catalogue of activities for the use of the various learning materials in the Reading Skills Centers. As the need arose, students were referred to clinical guidance and speech personnel.

The program coordinator and the teaching staff are dedicated professionals and are chiefly responsible for the success of the program. The coordinator's fine supervisory ability and style are certainly appreciated by the staff. The cooperation and understanding of the host school principals and staffs have undoubtedly contributed to the success of the program.

Student participants viewed the program most positively. Because the materials were appropriate, students began to expect success.

The original project proposal called for the use of a single test for purposes of placement, diagnosis, and evaluation. As suggested in Chapter III, such a plan resulted in some logical inconsistencies.

Conclusions

1. As a result of program participation, student performance has been outstanding as gauged by pretest/posttest differences. Indeed, performance has significantly surpassed anticipated posttest levels.
2. Excellent supervision and the dedication and hard work of all program staff have contributed to success.
3. Appropriate materials and facilities have also contributed to program success.
4. The first full year of operations has been remarkably successful. Program personnel should strive for continued development of the program in the coming years.

Recommendations

1. The program should most definitely be recycled.
2. The gains evidenced in this component suggest that the program should be expanded to include other schools that meet eligibility criteria.
3. The project coordinator and the teaching staff should be encouraged to continue to pursue an eclectic approach in the selection of

materials and teaching strategies.

4. Plans should be made for additional inservice training of staff in the diagnosis of reading difficulties.
5. Student eligibility for the program should be based upon the degree of reading retardation found at the time of the nonpublic schools' spring testing program. The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test could then be used solely for diagnostic and evaluation purposes.

CHAPTER V

EXEMPLARY PROGRAM ABSTRACT

Component Code	Activity Code	Objective Code
6 0 8 2 4-5	7 2 0	8 0 1

SED Number 75-003
Function No. 09-59627

Central Title I Remedial Services
For Eligible Nonpublic School Pupils
Reading Skills Center Component

The 1974-1975 Reading Skills Center program was designed to provide intensive diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction for students in grades four through eight who had evidenced reading retardation in excess of two and one-half years below their nominal grade level. Priority for participation in the program was given to those pupils who had previously participated in the Title I nonpublic school corrective reading program and who had made little or insufficient progress.

Students attended the Centers in groups of five students per teacher. The groups received instruction for three to five sessions per week in class periods ranging from forty-five to sixty minutes. Two teachers were located at each of the eight Centers so that a total of about four hundred students could be served.

The individual assignments prescribed by the teacher were selected for putative congruency with 500 specific reading objectives catalogued by an educational publishing company. Since the learning was largely self-directed and self-paced, the teachers were free to work with individual students while others were working on their own.

The evaluation objective of showing significant improvement in reading, using the real posttest and anticipated posttest scores, was achieved. Furthermore, the mean difference between pretests and posttests was in excess of one grade equivalent.

Program strengths included a favorable teacher-pupil ratio, the quality of the teaching staff and their effort, skillful supervision, the selection of appropriate facilities and materials, the eclectic approach of program staff, and the cooperation of host school principals and teachers.

READING SKILLS CENTER COMPONENT

Function No. 09-59627

Use Table 26, for Historical Regression Design (6-step Formula) for Reading and Mathematics.

Appendix A:

26. Standardized Test Results

In the Table below, enter the requested assessment information about the tests used to evaluate the effectiveness of major project component/activities in achieving desired objectives. This form requires means obtained from scores in the form of grade equivalent units as processed by the 6-step formula. (see District Evaluator's Handbook of Selected Evaluation Procedures, 1974, p. 29-31) Before completing this table, read all footnotes. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

25

Component Code	Activity Code	Test Used 1/	Form		Level		Total N 2/	Group ID 3/	Number Tested 4/	Pretest		Predicted Posttest Mean	Actual Posttest		Obtained Value of t	Sub-Group 5/
			Pre	Post	Pre	Post				Date	Mean		Date	Mean		
6 08 2 4	7 2 0	SD66	W	W	I	I	128	24	117	a	b	b	c	b	b	
6 08 2 5	7 2 0	SD66	W	W	I	I	45	25	44	a	3.02	3.28	c	3.86	7.50*	
6 08 2 4	7 2 0	SD66	W	W	II	II	44	24	41	a	2.57	2.80	c	3.88	8.35*	
6 08 2 5	7 2 0	SD66	W	W	II	II	204	25	199	a	b	b	c	b	b	

1/ Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-58, CAT-70, etc.). * Level of significance $p < .001$

2/ Total number of participants in the activity.

3/ Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 5). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.

4/ Total number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations.

5/ Provide data for the following groups separately: Neglected (code as N), Delinquent (code as D), and Handicapped (code as H). Place the indicated code letter in the last column to signify the subgroup evaluated.

a. Pretest administered in 4/74, 9/74 or during first week of attendance

b. These data contained in the body of the report since a split-plot factorial analysis was performed.

Posttest administered in 4/75 or prior to a student's date of discharge

In this table enter all data loss information. Between MIR, item #30 and this form, all participants in each activity must be accounted for. The component and activity codes used in completion of item #30 should be used here so that the two tables match. See definitions below table for further instructions.

Central Title I Remedial Services For Eligible Nonpublic School Pupils

READING SKILLS CENTER COMPONENT

Component Code				Activity Code				(1) Group I.D.	(2) Test Used	(3) Total N	(4) Number Tested/ Analyzed	(5) Participants Not Tested/ Analyzed		(6) Reasons why students were not tested, or if tested, were not analyzed		Number/ Reason
												N	%			
6	0	8	2	4	7	2	0	24	SD-66 L I	128	117	11	8.6	Moved/left school		5
														Students registered in grade 3		2
														Miscellaneous discharges		4
6	0	8	2	5	7	2	0	25	SD-66 L I	45	44	1	2.2	Moved/left school		1
6	0	8	2	4	7	2	Q	24	SD-66 L II	44	41	3	6.8	Moved/left school		1
														Transfer to other Title I prog		1
														Absent from test		1
6	0	8	2	5	7	2	0	25	SD-66 L II	204	199	5	2.5	Moved/left school		3
														Transfer to other Title I prog		2

- (1) Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 9). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.
- (2) Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-70, SDAT-74, etc.).
- (3) Number of participants in the activity.
- (4) Number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations found on item#30.
- (5) Number and percent of participants not tested and/or not analyzed on item#30.
- (6) Specify all reasons why students were not tested and/or analyzed. For each reason specified, provide a separate number count. If any further documentation is available, please attach to this form. If further space is needed to specify and explain data loss, attach additional pages to this form.